MDCR
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Accessible Voting in Michigan

Civil Rights, Accessibility, and Your Right to Vote

Accessible Voting is a Right

Voting is a fundamental civil right. Every eligible voter should be able to cast a ballot privately, independently, and without unnecessary barriers. Michigan law and federal disability rights laws help ensure that voters with disabilities have equal access to every stage of the voting process, whether voting early, on Election Day, or by mail-in ballot. **Michigan.gov/Vote** serves as the state's official source for personalized voting information Using official information can help voters prepare before Election Day and understand the resources available to them.

Michigan voters with disabilities have the right to:

- Vote privately and independently whenever possible
- Receive reasonable accommodations when voting in person
- Use accessible voting equipment at polling places and early voting sites
- Request assistance from a person of their choice, with limited exceptions
- Vote by an accessible electronic absentee ballot if they cannot independently complete a paper ballot because of a disability

No eligible voter should be prevented from voting because of a disability or inaccessible voting location.

Accessible Polling Places

Every polling place and early voting site in Michigan must be accessible to voters with disabilities. Election officials, including county, city, and township clerks, are responsible for reducing barriers and providing features such as:

- Accessible entrances
- Ramps or elevators where needed
- Unlocked and usable entrances
- Accessible paths of travel
- Adequate lighting and seating
- Accessible voting equipment

If you plan to vote in person, you can contact your local clerk before Election Day to confirm your polling location is accessible. If accessibility issues arise, election officials must help provide an mail-in voting option.

Voter Assist Terminals (VATs)

Every polling place and early voting site is required to have a Voter Assistant Terminal (VAT). A VAT is a ballot-marking device designed to help voters with a wide range of disabilities cast their ballot independently. Depending on the voting system used in your county, VATs may include features such as:

- Audio ballots for voters who are blind or have low vision
- Large-print display options
- Adjustable contrasts and font sizes
- Sip-and-puff or paddle devices
- Touchscreen accessibility
- Alternative input devices for voters with limited mobility

The VAT helps voters mark their ballot. After the ballot is marked, it is counted the same way as every other ballot, ensuring equal treatment of every vote.

Accessible Mail-in Voting

Some voters may find voting from home to be the most accessible option. Michigan offers an electronic mail-in ballot for voters whose disabilities prevent them from independently marking a traditional paper mail-in ballot. **This option allows voter to:**

- Receive their ballot electronically
- Use their own assistive technology to complete the ballot privately
- Print and return the completed ballot by mail, secure drop box (find a location at **Michigan.gov/Vote**), or directly to their local clerk

Voters may request an accessible mail-in ballot beginning 40 days before an election and up until 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day. Applying early is encouraged to allow enough time for mailing and ballot return. Voters may also join the Permanent Accessible Absentee Voter List to automatically receive their ballot before local, state, and federal elections.

Curbside Voting

If you arrive at your polling place or early voting site and cannot enter because of accessibility barriers or mobility limitations, you may request curbside voting.

An election official can bring you a ballot outside so you can vote from your vehicle or another accessible location near the polling place. If needed, someone accompanying you may enter the polling place to notify election officials of your request.

Assistance While Voting In-Person

If you need help marking or casting your ballot, you may receive assistance from a person you choose.

The person assisting you cannot be:

- Your employer
- An agent of your employer
- An officer or agent of your labor union

Election workers are also available to explain voting equipment and assist voters when requested while maintaining voter privacy whenever possible.

Preparing Before Election Day

- Confirm voter registration
- Find their polling place or early voting location
- Locate their local clerk
- Request an mail-in ballot
- Learn about accessible voting options
- Find voting equipment information by county
- Access a selection of educational videos with captions and American Sign Language (ASL)

Planning ahead can help make voting easier and reduce unexpected barriers on election day.

Know Your **Voting Rights**

Voters with disabilities who have questions or encounter accessibility barriers can contact:

Ombudsperson for Accessible Elections
Phone: **517-335-2730**
Email: **MDOS-ADAVoting@michigan.gov**

File a Complaint
Voters can also contact the Michigan Department of Civil Rights if they believe they have been discriminated against during the voting process. To file a complaint:

Phone: **800-482-3604**
URL: **www.michigan.gov/mdcr/public-portal**